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and furnish the most satisfactory general refutation of the detached essays, which perverted ingenuity is ever able to dress up in defence of any paradox, however amazing. We rejoice in its appearance ;—in its appearance at this crisis. Earnestly do we desire, that it may perform the salutary office of aiding to win back the judgments of our Southern brethren to the sound doctrines of 1789. It seems impossible to us to resist the conviction, that the theories, which have been recently broached, carry us back to the rude and abortive confederacies and plans of confederacies of other days. Well may that doctrine be called Nullification, in which the experience of two centuries goes for nothing, and in which the sole and express object for framing the Constitution is set at nought.

ART. IV.—*The Whale Fishery.*

1. *An Account of the Arctic Regions, with a History and Description of the Northern Whale Fishery.* By WM. SCORESBY, JR. F. R. S. E. In two volumes. Edinburgh. 1820.
2. *Journal of a Voyage to the Northern Whale Fishery, including Researches and Discoveries on the Eastern Coast of West Greenland, made in the Summer of 1822.* By WM. SCORESBY, JR. F. R. S. E. Edinburgh. 1823.
3. *Discovery and Adventure in the Polar Seas and Regions, with an Account of the Whale Fishery.* Harper's Family Library, No. 14. New York. 1833.
4. *Scientific Tracts.* Nos. 18 & 24.—*Whale Fishery.* Boston. 1833.

FROM the legends and chronicles of the inhabitants of the Northern shores and islands of Europe, we learn that they have always depended upon the whale for much of their employment and subsistence. Among them all, and among the Esquimaux of North America, we discover rude implements and canoes for capturing the huge monster. Those of our readers who have read the 'Pirate,' will recollect with what a hearty zeal the Zetlanders engaged in capturing a stranded

whale, and they will not be shocked when we remind them, that the old Udaller, the father of the musing Minna, and the lively Brenda, was a whaler. In those Northern regions, when the season returns, an interest is manifested in enterprises of this nature, as though existence itself depended on the issue. At this we need not wonder. The flesh of the whale, which resembles coarse beef, is a necessary article of food. It affords a thin transparent substance, which answers the purpose of window glass, and the sinews, when properly separated, are used for thread. The common bones are employed in building the hut, the whalebone in finishing canoes and rude instruments, and the remainder is no despicable material for fuel. Besides, train oil and oleaginous matter of all kinds, are more grateful to the taste of the natives of these regions, than the choicest delicacies to a refined people. The reindeer is no greater blessing to the Laplander,—nor does the palm supply to the native of the tropical clime, a greater variety for his comfort and support, than does the whale to these Northern tribes. When, after being immured in the depths of winter for nine or ten months in the year, they at length emerge from the tombs of the living, the utmost activity is often displayed in preparation for a fishing voyage; and when all is ready, mothers and children, and old men, gather on the shore at the parting. When the seamen return, after an interval of many days, laden with the fruits of their successful but desperate exertion, transport is visible in the actions and visages of all, no less heartfelt and expressive, than that which was demonstrated by the bells of Lerwick when Parry returned in safety from one of his perilous but brilliant voyages.

The Biscayans appear to have been the first Europeans, who systematically and extensively pursued the whale fishery. The Northmen, who, after a long career of ravage and plunder, at length settled along the western shores of Europe, are said to have introduced it. The same descriptions of whale gear and instruments are now used, that were employed by the Biscayans in the fifteenth century, and the same methods of capture are practised. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, they became bold and adventurous, and straying as far as the coast of Iceland, they found there a Norwegian colony, disposed to unite in their enterprises. Their fleet soon numbered fifty or sixty sail of vessels.

Before the enthusiasm first roused by the brilliant successes of Columbus had subsided, the Dutch and English made many most calamitous attempts to reach the Indies by a north-east passage. In penetrating those icy regions, they met with vast numbers of whales,—undisturbed for centuries in their peculiar and exclusive seas, tame, sluggish, and disposed to yield as ready captives to the intruder. The navigators determined to unite profit with adventure, and although they might fail in obtaining, by their imagined passage, the spices of India, to bring home at least in their vessels the products of the bear, the walrus, the seal and the whale. From being only the incidental, these soon became the principal objects of these hazardous voyages, and the high hopes of men, panting for the lofty names of discoverers, were merged in the arduous toils of catching whales for profit.

The subject does not seem to have assumed any great commercial importance, till the seventeenth century. The first voyage, made for the sole purpose of whale fishing by the English, was about the year 1610. An Amsterdam and a London company soon sent out numerous fleets to Spitzbergen. Other nations of Europe commenced also at the same time. As each nation claimed the right to the whale grounds, frequent contests for sole possession rendered the voyages profitless and disastrous. The ships* went out in small squadrons, and had all the necessary naval preparations for plunder or defence. The English especially assumed quite a piratical character, and relied more upon the plunder of the interlopers, as they called the rest, than on their own honest and watchful exertions. After many years of silly and obstinate contention, an arrangement was made, by which the most eligible seas along the coast of Spitzbergen were divided among the English, Dutch, Hamburgers, French and Spaniards.

* In the library of the Antiquarian Society at Worcester, is a MS. narrative of one of these voyages, entitled 'A short discourse of a Voyage made in the year of our Lord 1613, to the late discovered countrye of Greenland, and a briefe description of the same countrye, and the comodities ther raised to the adventurers.' The expedition was commanded by Benjamin Joseph of London, who is dignified as 'chief captaine.' In one place the three highest in command are called 'Admirall,' 'Vice Admirall' and 'rere Admirall.' The fleet consisted of seven armed ships, provided with '24 Basks,' (Basques, Biscayans,) 'who were best experienced in that facultie of whale striking.' During the voyage, the fleet met with about twenty-five sail of vessels.

Subsequently to this division, the English Muscovy Company pursued the business successfully for a few years, but after a time their fleets gradually disappeared, and they finally deserted the northern oceans. A spell seems to have been cast upon all their operations; for while they were unfortunate year after year successively, the economical and calculating Dutch were annually rewarded with rich cargoes. They were obliged to renounce the business to these formidable rivals, who carried it forward with the same vigor and perseverance which they had displayed in all other commercial enterprises. At first, on their portion of the shores, the Dutch found the whales inert, passive and abundant. They formed a summer colony on the shore, for the purpose of extracting and preparing the oil from the blubber which the vessels brought in. Here, on the snowy waste, the little village of Smeerenberg relieved the dull monotony of death. A sight unseen before, the curling of smoke and the ringing of bells announced that man had taken possession, where nature had seemed to threaten a total extinction of animal existence. During the whole of the seventeenth century, the business gradually extended, and two hundred vessels, of various kinds and sizes, were frequently floating in the harbor of Smeerenberg. At length the whales became shy and intractable, and it was found necessary to push out into the open sea, and there engage in the fearful encounter. As they advanced into the open ocean, the scene of their toil became nearly as distant from their colony as from home, and they at length deemed it expedient to relinquish the intermediate station, and return with their cargoes directly to Holland. Not a vestige of this village is now to be seen.

It would be tedious and uninteresting, to follow in slow detail the fluctuations of this precarious business. Suffice it to say, that for more than a hundred years, the English hardly maintained a whale ship, while the Dutch and Hamburgers annual-

The commander exacted from all strange ships heavy contributions of oil and fins. At one time, preparation was made for action with five large ships in Belsound, the largest of which was of eight hundred tons burthen, commanded by Michael de Aristiga of St. John de Luz. The MS. is beautifully written, and the natural history of the 'new countrie' is illustrated by well drawn pictures. The expedition was fitted out at the 'charge and adventure of the Right Worshipfull Sir Thomas Smyth, knight, and the rest of the companie of Merchants tradeing into Moscovia, called the merchants of Newe Trades and Discoueries.'

ly, down to 1778, were employing a fleet of more than 200 vessels. During a part of the intermediate time, they employed as many as 300 vessels, and 18,000 men. The pride of their government was at length aroused, and stimulated by high bounties and high hopes, the English again became competitors. Their attempts, under the name of the Greenland Company and the South Sea Company, had proved abortive and ruinous. Between 1732 and 1749, the bounty had risen to 40*s.* per ton, at which it remained permanent for the remainder of the century. This was a new era in British fishery. Up to 1785, the average number of British whalers frequenting Greenland and Davis's Straits was about sixty. During the four following years it received an unprecedented increase, for in 1788, two hundred and fifty-three vessels were employed. The whale fleets of Holland were swallowed in the tremendous vortex of the French Revolution, leaving England to maintain more vessels in the Greenland seas, than all the other nations of Europe besides. It should be observed, that previously to this time, nearly all the maritime States of Europe had been at different periods engaged in the business, to a greater or less extent.

The English at first prosecuted the trade from their metropolis, but, selecting more eligible ports, from time to time, we find the whale squadrons now chiefly sailing from Hull and Whitby in England, and Peterhead, Aberdeen, Dundee and Leith in Scotland. The active and eager pursuit has driven the monsters from their old haunts, across the Atlantic. Vigilantly pursued among the Greenland channels, they have taken refuge in Davis's Straits and Baffin's Bay, and these are now the exclusive fields of the Greenland Fishery. In this fishery, for the eight years previous to 1818, one hundred and thirty ships were employed, but the fleet is now diminished to about ninety.

In following the history of this perilous and desperate mode of hardy industry, our attention is so enchained by dangers, storms and misery endured, as well as by the exhibition of the grandest spectacles with which nature gratifies the vision of man, that our curiosity is hardly aroused to a consideration of it as a source of national wealth. Here let us pause, to consider for a moment the perils of cold, of famine, of tempest and shipwreck, that are incident to these exhibitions. We must recollect, that the cruise is generally beyond the 70th parallel of

latitude. Exposed as these hardy mariners are to cold and danger and every imaginable hardship, success seems no flattering incentive. Obligated to sail among islands and mountains of ice, it requires all their watchfulness and dexterity to elude the besetting dangers. The masts and shrouds are often glazed with ice, —their cables of hemp or iron are snapped asunder like pipe stems, and benumbed as they must continually be, they thus navigate the ocean for months. We can imagine the common dangers that beset them ; but who can picture their situation, when darkness makes the storm more awful, and their emotions more intense ? The ship rises upon a mountain wave, and plunges into a chasm, perhaps to strike upon a mass of ice. After a disruption of those immense icy fields, which cover the arctic regions, it requires all the seamen's skill to thread the passages. Sometimes, detained late in the season, they get imbedded in the shoals of ice, and have been thus compelled to endure the long northern winter. They perhaps drift onward far towards the pole. The days gradually shorten, the sun makes a short segment above the horizon, finally a small portion of his disk appears, and the next day he is gone to leave the world ' herbless, treeless, lifeless.' Without any of those comforts, those furnaces, and preparations for mental excitement, which made the winterings of Ross and Parry more tolerable, they have patiently waited, month after month, till the breaking up of the following season. Perhaps they go out for game, and one of the crew finds himself in the embrace of a huge bear, and the mangled corpse only of a comrade is rescued after a desperate engagement, rendered more fierce, as the bear is more raging and ravenous from a month of fasting.

Sometimes, vessel after vessel has been dashed to atoms, and the few remnants of many crews that have gone down to the fathomless abysses are obliged to crowd into a single ship, already perhaps short of provisions, or into a few small boats, and push for a northern shore. And what awaits them there ? If too late to reach the ship, or the settlement of more civilized man, divided among a savage tribe, they may possibly survive till spring in filthy huts, where the condensed moisture falls in flakes of snow, upon the admission of cold by an aperture. Happily they often experience a hospitality, among those rude people, which they have looked for in vain among a more cultivated race. If not so fortunate as to land where they see the vestiges of

man, they must erect as competent a hovel as their slender means will admit, and make use of every expedient to sustain the vital energies. Sometimes they survive and are rescued; and the almost incredible tale is told of four Russian sailors, who were preserved through six of these dreary winters, three of whom finally returned to their homes. Some of them are taken off, but how many perish in convulsions, before the extremity of cold is set in! How many fall a prey to the famished wolf! How many suffer miseries untold, because unseen! These are not the suggestions of fancy. The Dutch endeavored, in the early days of the fishery, to establish a settlement on one of these bleak coasts, if practicable. They left several men to try the experiment of wintering. In the following summer, a boat landed on the coast, and found the hut strongly closed. They forced it open. It was a tomb. All had perished,—four men were found frozen,—and on the last page of their journal was written,—‘We are all four stretched on our beds, and are still alive, and would eat willingly, if any one of us were able to rise and light a fire. We implore the Almighty, with folded hands, to deliver us from this life, which it is impossible for us to prolong without food, or any thing to warm our frozen limbs. None of us can help the other,—each must support his own misery.’ We can only realize the extremity of their situation by recurring to a horrible description of the poet.

“They lifted up their eyes and then beheld
Each other’s aspects,—saw, and shrieked and died.
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written fiend.”

We have testimony enough that such calamities have befallen our fellow-creatures in these regions. Many must have suffered and perished, whose sufferings and end there were no survivors to relate. It is but just to say, however, that for the period of a century, previous to 1778, the number of ships, entirely lost, did not amount to four in a hundred. The fishing was mostly pursued in the Greenland seas; and pursued with more certainty and safety, than it has been since the whalers have ventured into the depths of Baffin’s Bay. Every autumn, the English papers teem again with accounts of remarkable casualties and distresses. For the three seasons

previous to 1824, one seventh of the fleet was totally lost, and in 1830, one fifth never returned.* When we look back upon the whole history of the fishery, and reflect upon the thousands that have been swallowed up once, and forever, how strictly and peculiarly applicable is the language of Irving! 'They have gone down amidst the roar of the tempest,—their bones lie whitening among the caverns of the deep. Silence, oblivion,—like the waves, have closed over them, and no one can tell the story of their end. What sighs have been wafted after that ship! What prayers have been offered up at the deserted fireside of home! How often has the mistress, the wife, the mother, pored over the daily news, to catch some casual intelligence of this rover of the deep! How has expectation darkened into anxiety,—anxiety into dread,—and dread into despair! Alas! not one memento remains for love to cherish. All that shall ever be known is, that she sailed from her port, and was never heard of more.'

The icebergs are causes of great peril to the Greenland whalemén. They are congelations of fresh water. It is supposed, that as the water pours down from the hills along the coasts, it is frozen in some hollow and the base of the iceberg first formed. Successive years raise it. The snows fall and melt and are frozen on the summit. It rises higher and higher for the greater part of a century, till it emulates in height the tops of the surrounding mountains. Its base, gradually encroaching upon the ocean, is undermined by the current and dashing of the waves. At last it falls with a stupendous plunge into the abyss, and floats triumphantly on

* We have the London Morning Chronicle of Oct. 12, 1830, which recounts the 'disastrous intelligence,' from the fishery of that year, principally as detailed in a Hull paper. 'It is our painful duty this day, to record the loss of *eighteen* ships employed in this fishery, six of which belong to Hull. We do not remember having ever witnessed a more melancholy sight, than that which our streets this morning presented. Hundreds of persons, particularly females, were assembled in groups, anxiously enquiring of each other the news from the fishery, as a report was fast gaining ground, that some casualties had occurred, though no one could form a correct idea of their extent.' Ninety-one British vessels sailed in the spring, of which eighteen were totally and completely lost. The cause of these disasters was a delay of twelve weeks in Melville Bay, while the entrance was blocked with ice, and the danger necessarily encountered in obtaining a voyage after the best of the season was past. Altogether the loss was without precedent.

the bosom of the Atlantic, till it melts and dissolves away in a milder latitude, after floating for months, a terror to the unhappy mariner who crosses its path. They often rise three hundred feet above the surface ; and since experiment shows that only about one seventh of these masses is out of water, some of them must penetrate two thousand feet below. Several whalers are frequently moored at once under the protection of one of these mountains : it is necessary, however, to keep at a respectful distance, for large pieces are frequently detached, and dart upwards with great force. Sometimes the lower portion is dissolved by the warmer temperature of the water, and the mammoth, as if disposed to enjoy his repose more voluptuously, turns slowly and heavily over. Floating on the ocean, no resistance, short of the adamantine shores with which they are familiar, can oppose them. Instances are not unknown of two of these mighty masses coming together with a tremendous crash, and shivering to a thousand atoms the rude bark of the mariner.

The more common kind of drifting field-ice is congealed from ocean water, and is rendered stronger and thicker by the addition of snows and rains. Broken to fragments by storms, the pieces are frequently driven together and piled one upon another. Strong as the most intense cold can rivet and connect it, the iceberg rolls along with apparently no resistance ; and dismal is the fate of that crew whose vessel, as if bound by iron in the ice, perceives one of these bearing down and threatening certain destruction.

The fogs and dense atmosphere in these regions make the refracting power so great, that the sun always appears above the horizon long before his due time of return. The moisture, frozen in little *spiculae* as it falls, reflects a thousand ever-varying tints, and exhibits a brilliancy unknown to those who live in a milder zone. Here also is seen the unaccustomed optical illusion, *the mirage*,—a vessel often appearing with the masts downward, and her hull upturned and high raised in air. The *aurora borealis* is seen also with a splendor, which the richest fancy can hardly depict. It flashes over the expanse, till the whole heavens are resplendent with a blaze of light. The bright clouds, wafted hither and thither by every change of the fitful breeze, are said to resemble the evolutions of contending armies, and are looked upon by the rude natives with an awe, that could only arise from their be-

lief that these are ‘the spirits of his fathers roaming through the land of souls.’ To make up the dazzling brilliancy of the scene, parrhelia, or mock suns, appear in numbers at a time in different parts of the heavens.

Where is the adequate inducement to incur the certain and inevitable hardships of a Greenland voyage? There have been single voyages perhaps, fraught with as much danger; but never has any great branch of commercial business been pursued so long with such resolute and unabated vigor. We know not where to look for the motive, unless it is found in the same disposition that leads men to engage in games of hazard and lotteries. The pursuit is a lottery. It is a lottery to the seamen as well as to the owners, for they are paid a certain portion of the profits of the voyage, instead of monthly wages. One voyage in a thousand exceeds the most sanguine calculations,—many are moderately successful,—but how many are the *blanks*, has been told in a thousand sad catastrophes. The elder Captain Scoresby, a veteran whaler, went through twenty-eight of these inclement voyages successfully,—he killed 498 whales, yielding 4246 tuns of oil, valued with the whalebone at £150,000. On the other hand, a large portion of the squadron, year after year successively, have met with shipwreck or some cruel disaster. As we have before stated, in 1830, hardly a ship escaped without disheartening losses, and the following year, we believe, brought us accounts that tempestuous weather visited them again with similar calamities. Here we have cause to wonder more at the madness and foolhardiness, than at the undaunted energy of man. It is well, under these circumstances, that in depression the business has always received the sympathy, and in prosperity has never aroused the jealousy of the British government.

Following the history of the Greenland fishery for the last fifty years, it will be perceived that the English fleet has rapidly decreased from about 250 to 90. The ships have not entirely deserted the whale fishery, but have been diverted into other oceans in pursuit of other kinds of whales. They have prosecuted the sperm whale fishery in the Pacific and other oceans; and annually, a fleet, about as numerous as the Greenland fleet, is sent from England into the southern seas. The business is carried on successfully from New Holland and from the British possessions in North America. Altogether the number of British whale ships cannot fall much short of 250

sail. As a history of one part of the sperm and right whale fisheries in the southern seas is a history of the whole, and the same considerations apply to all, we shall only give a detailed account of *our own* fisheries in those parts of the globe.

To the natural historian, the whale must be a subject of curious and interesting inquiry. Our purpose is to consider him rather as an object of commercial, than scientific speculation; but a proper understanding of the subject in this view, obliges us to give some account of the whale, and the different products for which he is pursued. Scientifically speaking, the whale is not a fish, but is included by naturalists under the class *mammalia*. He is not covered with scales. He is not cold and white blooded like fish, but has an organization of the heart like bipeds and quadrupeds. Like them also he has lungs, and breathes like them the open air. The female nourishes the young from her own milk. Under the *cetaceous* order, are ranked the narwal, the porpoise, the grampus, the dolphin, and various others, which, if not whales, are 'very like a whale.' The walrus, the seal, and sea elephant, seem to hold an intermediate rank between the cetacea and quadrupeds, and are all objects of commercial pursuit. The walrus has a small round head, often bearing a striking resemblance to the human, and hence it has been suggested that in ancient times he has given rise to the fanciful reports of tritons and syrens, and in modern times to the frightful legends of mermen and mermaids. To what order the sea serpent belongs, remains to be proved by a more intimate knowledge of that mysterious inhabitant of the deep. Though we have little doubt of his existence, yet we are disposed to include him in a very extensive order, called *mendacea*. The head of the whale is about one third of the animal, and the open mouth displays a fearful chasm. The tail is not vertical like that of fish, but flat and horizontal. It is broad and muscular, and with it he swims, with it casually or designedly he dashes the boats of the whalers and disables or kills them. 'But the most unique feature of the whale, is the blow holes or nostrils, which appear like natural *jets d'eau*.' They emit a warm vapor, and where the breathing is vehement a little beneath the surface, water is thrown to the height of twenty or thirty feet in the air, which is crimsoned with blood when the victim is mortally wounded. The sight of this spout, or the loud noise caused by its emission, is the first sign to the whaler of his ap-

proach. Under the outer hide, to the depth of a foot, extends a fat oleaginous matter, which appears to be a wrapper, designed by nature for protection against intensity of cold. This is cut and torn off by knives and hooks, and furnishes a quantity of oil equal to three quarters of its own bulk. The whale shows the greatest affection for her young. These delicate nurslings, only fourteen or fifteen feet in length, and weighing merely a ton, are often killed for the sole purpose of provoking an encounter with the parent, and then the contest is deadly and desperate. This inoffensive and lethargic creature sometimes displays vivacity and playfulness. Putting himself in a vertical position, the head downwards, with a rapid motion of the tail he leaves the sea in foam and froth. At other times, with a most ludicrous agility, he darts wholly from his element, and the mass, weighing perhaps seventy tons, is seen suspended in the air. If, as a certain philosopher would make us believe, this earth is only a thin uppercrust, it is happy that he alights on so flexible and elastic a medium as water, for such ungainly pranks on land might fracture the surface, and give us, however unwillingly, an inspection of the far famed 'Symmes's hole.' It is perhaps fortunate that mammoths and behemoths are extinct. Such veritable historians as the Gullivers and Munchausens, have gravely asserted that whales have been mistaken for islands, and that cellars have been dug and trees planted upon their backs; but that after some years they have disappeared, giving rise to those otherwise incredible stories of islands swallowed in the deep. If we relied on all their statements, they would fain make us believe that whole families of Nova Zemblans have resided during their long winter in the interior of a whale. Though most marvellous accounts have been always given, the average length of a whale, taking into consideration the various species, does not exceed fifty feet. A species of whale, however, called by the Greenlanders the razorback, has been known to measure one hundred and five feet in length. This is the largest of the whale tribe. It yields but little oil, and is more violent, restive and muscular than the other species. It is seldom seen, and more rarely attacked.

The common, or right whale, (*balaena mysticetus*) is the exclusive object of the Greenland fishery. The various species of this whale are found in every part of the ocean, but

most abundantly in the Greenland seas, and on the Banks of Brazil. The valuable products of this animal are common, or right whale oil, and whalebone. Of 322 individuals of this species, Captain Scoresby says, the longest he ever measured was 58 feet in length. The largest quantity of oil, ever obtained from the right whale, is about 200 barrels.* Before the Revolutionary war, a sloop from New Bedford, commanded by Captain John Howland, captured one in the Straits of Belleisle which yielded 212 barrels of oil. Two fish loaded the sloop with 400 barrels of oil, and 400 pounds of bone. These however were of extraordinary size. When taken in the northern seas, the skin of this whale is clean and smooth, but when taken in southern latitudes, he is shaggy and covered with barnacles and small shell fish. The food of this kind of whales is composed chiefly of small shrimps and animalculæ. We should hardly expect, in regions so desolate and scathed as those beyond the Arctic circle, subsistence for the animal creation, or an organization capable of sustaining the vital energies. But instead of ceasing, life seems here to spring forth in more boundless profusion ; and the arctic zone, in the immensity and variety of animal life, rivals the production of the tropical suns. The whole northern ocean teems with minute and almost invisible particles of life. Where discernible by the microscope, they prove to be of the class vermes, of the genus *medusa*. They are of a soft, elastic substance, and are supposed to be the cause of an olive green color, which extends frequently over an hundred miles of ocean. The number outruns the expression of language ; and, if we may rely on the estimate of Scoresby, 80,000 men, employed in counting from the creation, could only number two square miles of these animalculæ. These are food for the next higher order, and each degree becomes food for that next elevated in the scale. Among these great shoals, the right whale is generally found, feeding only upon the smaller degrees. The upper part of his mouth is composed of compact slabs of whalebone, which terminate in a kind of fibre or fringe. He swims when feeding, with his mouth

* Douglas, in his history of America, says that the whalers of Davis's Straits kill whales yielding 500 or 600 barrels of oil, and bone of 18 feet in length ; but this is an error. The largest whales yield but about 200 barrels of oil and 14 feet bone.

wide open, occasionally shutting over the lower lip to squeeze out the water. The small fish remain entangled in the network, and are devoured.

The sperm whale, (blunt headed *cachalot*) is of a different genus from the right whale. He is principally distinguished by a broad blunt head, by a heavy bunch beyond the middle of his back, and by his single blow-hole on the very extremity of the head, while the right whale has two blow-holes, which are placed five or six feet from the nose. The under jaw of this genus is supplied with teeth, while the upper is destitute. His food also is of a different nature, for he feeds upon a gelatinous kind of animated substance, belonging to the class *Mollusca*. This is called the squid or cuttle fish. It sometimes is seen of an immense magnitude, and is provided with long arms, on the extremities of which is a kind of suckers. It is to the fact that the whale feeds on this animal and fish-spawn, that Byron alludes in his apostrophe to the Ocean,

‘ Even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made.’

The spermaceti whales are found in the greatest numbers near the Western Islands, (the Azores,) on the coast of Africa, and in various parts of the Pacific Ocean. While the sperm whale yields far less oil in quantity, it is about three times as valuable as common oil. The spermaceti, called in its crude state head-matter, is taken from a cavity in the head of the whale, where it is found almost entirely by itself. That rich perfumery, called ambergris, is taken from the intestines of this whale, and is said to be found only in subjects of disease. The rarest of this genus yields about one hundred and fifteen barrels. While the right whale roams alone, the sperm whale is gregarious. We cannot forbear to relate a very unusual and grand appearance of a herd of these whales, as described by an eye-witness.

‘ A ship was becalmed in the Pacific. The man at the mast head announced, “ there she blows ! ” The boats were lowered, and manned as usual. But the whales, instead of rolling heavily along, seemed to approach with great rapidity. They appeared to be in an agitation, that could be caused only by agony of fright. They would dart rapidly. Again they would cut in spiral paths or leap abruptly from their element. Some dashed over the surface, and many of the dark masses, moving like shadows of

black clouds, exhibited the same agitation below. All this time, every spiracle gave violent and repeated explosions. We need not say, that the sailors looked on with the silence of death. The herd soon passed beyond the reach of sight, leaving the most experienced to wonder for the unseen and unknown cause of the consternation.'

The ships, employed in the whale fishery, are generally from three hundred to three hundred and fifty tons burthen. Some are employed from this country, of a much larger size. The Greenland ships are built with all the strength and durability with which wood and iron can be combined, to enable them to withstand the rude concussions of the ice. The ships, according to the necessities of their particular voyage, are manned with from twenty to thirty or forty men. The boats are long and narrow, and sharp at each extremity, and are built of the lightest materials for buoyancy and speed. They float upon the surface with the grace of the sea-bird upon its peculiar element, and are changed and turned by the steersman and five strong rowers, with amazing dexterity. When cruising, the Greenlanders have the captain or other officer stationed in a little box, called the crow's nest, on the main top. Protected, as far as he can be protected, when the thermometer indicates a temperature ranging from 10° to 30° below zero, with his telescope he describes the whale, and guides the ship through the perilous icy channels.

The method of taking the whale, as practised by all nations and for every species, is nearly as follows. The whale is compelled to come frequently to the surface, for the purpose of breathing. The nearest boat approaches from behind, from which the harpoon is launched into the huge carcass. This it is almost impossible to disengage, it being provided with two strong barbs. If not instantly killed, the whale sinks, and sinks often to a great depth. Exhausted by the immense superincumbent pressure of the water, he sometimes comes up dead. Frequently he sinks only a short distance; but as soon as he rises, the whalers endeavor to plunge into him the lance, an instrument of the finest steel, sharpened with the keenness of the surgeon's lancet. Attached to the harpoon is a line, which, as the animal is disposed to sink or dash through the waves, is suffered to run loose around a small post in the stern of the boat, and it often flies with such rapidity that the harpooner is enveloped in smoke, and it becomes necessary to pour on wa-

ter, to prevent the friction from generating flame. They often bind line after line together. If the line become entangled while the whale is sinking, the boat sometimes rears one end aloft, and makes a majestic dive into the deep. In the contest the boat is sometimes dashed to shivers, and the men experience no pleasant immersion, if they are fortunate enough to escape without broken limbs. The whale, stung with the fatal wound, sometimes dashes along the surface, with a death-like energy, and the little boat, almost under water, flies with the velocity of the wind. If he escape, he escapes with a prize on which he has no cause of congratulation, for he carries deeply buried in his body one or more of the sharp instruments, and drags off several hundred fathoms of rope. Our whalers have found irons in the carcass of a whale, known to have been planted there several years before on another ocean. As the warp flies, it sometimes throws its coils around the body of a man, and dragging him over in a moment, it carries him into the ocean depths, from which he never more emerges. Sometimes it only dislocates or breaks the legs and arms of the unfortunate men, who become entangled in the folds. A captain of a New London ship, was caught by two coils of the warp, one around his body, and another around his leg. He had the presence of mind immediately to seize his knife, and after a while succeeded in cutting himself loose. He was carried however to a great depth, and when he returned to the surface, was almost exhausted. The whale, when roused to desperation, makes an onset with his mouth only. Then he crushes a boat to atoms, and the men escape by jumping into the sea. A sperm whale destroyed two boats of a Nantucket ship, and then attacked the ship, but being obliged to turn over nearly on his back to use the under jaw, with which he does execution, he made little impression upon the vessel.

We have thus far followed the Europeans in the northern fishery. It remains to follow our own people to other and broader seas, in the safer, more extensive, and more lucrative prosecution of the business. Second only in maritime importance among nations, our country has already outstripped all others in the whale fishery. Our efforts first commenced in open boats on the shores of Cape Cod and Nantucket, at an early period of our history. As soon as a whale appeared to the keen eyes of our fishermen, a boat was pushed off in pursuit. This precarious business is not even now forgotten, and

the huge carcass of the leviathan is not an unfrequent reward of the watchful inhabitants of the Cape Cod towns. The boat was soon enlarged to the sloop, whose cruise stretched gradually as far as the straits of Belleisle and Labrador, and along our southern coasts to the West India Seas. In time, the sloop was metamorphosed into a brig or a ship, and the shores of Africa were next frequented. The adventurers crossed the equator to attack the monster on the rugged coasts of Brazil and Patagonia. Soon, the arduous doubling of Cape Horn opened to our researches the vast expanse of the Pacific. Our ships may now be seen lingering for supplies in all the western ports of South America, and one hundred of them annually recruit at the Sandwich Islands. They have scoured every part of the Pacific; and the coasts of Japan are now the scene of their most successful labors. Thence they often return home, around the Cape of Good Hope, thus circumnavigating the globe in a three years' voyage.

It appears from the early history of the Colonies, that our bays were once plenteously stocked with whales. A poem, published in England, as early as 1623, by one William Morrell, among other fish, flesh, and creeping things, thus mentions the whale,

‘The mighty whale doth in these harbours lye,
Whose oyle the careful merchant deare will buy.’

For near a century, the business was carried on from the Cape Cod towns, particularly Provincetown, Truro, and Wellfleet, in open boats. They subsequently pursued the business in larger craft, and in some instances their vessels were despatched to Labrador, for the double purpose of cod and whale fishing. Nantucket was settled in 1759. The inhabitants were instructed in the whale fishery by the Cape Cod people. The whales were brought in by boats, and the oil was extracted on the shore. In 1730, they employed as many as twenty-five sloops, and about this period they began to erect works on deck, and put up the oil on shipboard. The fleet constantly increased. In 1756, eighty sloops sailed from the Island, and on the breaking out of the Revolutionary war, one hundred and forty sloops, schooners, and brigs, were engaged upon the coasts of Guinea, Brazil, and the West Indies, annually. Thirty thousand barrels of oil were the rich result

of their vigorous exertions. About the year 1765, the inhabitants of Dartmouth, now New Bedford, began the business on the shore of Acushnet river, gradually launched their vessels in the pursuit, and at the commencement of the war employed forty or fifty sail. From this place was fitted out the first whaling expedition to the Falkland Islands in 1774, consisting of two vessels. Thus the New England whale fishery, previously to the Revolution, already employed nearly two hundred vessels. The extent of this business, and the indefatigable manner of its prosecution, is best illustrated by the felicitous language of Burke.

‘Look at the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the Whale Fishery. Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson’s Bay, and Davis’s Straits, whilst we are looking for them beneath the arctic circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen serpent of the south. Falkland Islands, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and resting place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them, than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know, that while some of them draw the line, and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude, and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people,—a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood.’

After the war, the rotten and decayed hulks were repaired, and new ships built and launched from both the ports of Nantucket and New Bedford. While the former place again pursued almost exclusively her old employment, the vessels from the latter were some of them allured from it by better prospects. The first American vessel that delighted the eyes of ‘his Majesty’s loving subjects,’ in a British port, and there exultingly unfurled the fresh and broad folds of the star-span-

gled banner, sailed from Nantucket.* It might be mentioned, as a singular coincidence, that one of the ships, from which the tea was thrown overboard in Boston harbor, before the Revolution, was owned at the same port. While our commerce was freighting for those nations, who were embroiled in the contests growing out of the French Revolution, the extension of the business was by no means rapid. It met with the severest reverses it had ever experienced, during the late war. Most of our whale ships in the Pacific were captured. Recaptured by Porter and Downes, many of them returned, but the greater part were burned, sunk, or turned into transports for the British navy. The island of Nantucket alone lost *twenty-seven* ships.

Since the termination of that war, the business has advanced with unprecedented rapidity. Port after port has launched her ships into the Pacific ; and we learn from the newspapers, that whaling companies have been formed at Wiscasset in Maine, and at Wilmington in Delaware. The following estimate of the number of ships employed from the several whaling ports of the United States, is derived from authentic sources.

* The first vessel that displayed the American flag in a British port, was the brig Bedford of Nantucket, then commanded by Captain William Moers. During the Revolutionary war, the inhabitants of Nantucket maintained a neutral position, and a specified number of their whalers were authorized by the British Government to continue their expeditions. Mr. Rotch of Nantucket afterwards obtained permission of Admiral Digby, then commander on the New York station, to transport his oil to England. The Bedford, which was one of his vessels, sailed under this permission, and arrived in the Downs soon after the conclusion of the preliminary articles of peace. She immediately hoisted the American flag, and carried it displayed, as she proceeded up the Thames. This new spectacle excited a great sensation, and the brig was visited by crowds of persons, among whom was a sister of the celebrated John Wilkes.

The honor of first displaying the star-spangled banner, in a British port, has been sometimes erroneously attributed to another ship, called the Maria, also from Nantucket, and belonging to the same Mr. Rotch. The mistake probably arose from her having been subsequently commanded by the same Captain Moers, who commanded the Bedford on the voyage in question. The Maria was a little ship of 200 tons, built at Scituate, for a privateer. After undergoing repeated repairs, she is still, we understand, in very good condition, makes unusually successful voyages, and, though more than half a century old, bids fair to outlast another generation.

From New Bedford,*	184
Nantucket,	73
Edgartown, Falmouth, and Fall River,	12
New London,†	37
Sag Harbor,	24
Bristol, Warren and Newport, (R. I.),	31
New York, Hudson, Poughkeepsie and New- burgh,	21
Ports north of Cape Cod, viz. Plymouth, Salem, Newburyport, and Portsmouth,	10
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	392

Several ships are building, designed for the employment. It appears, therefore, that an aggregate of *four hundred ships*, (including a few barques and brigs under that name) will be engaged during the present year in the whaling business from this country. To show how actively and continuously the pursuit is kept up, we may mention that, of the one hundred and eighty-four vessels belonging to the district of New Bedford, one hundred and seventy-one, navigated by 4242 men, were actually at sea on the 30th September last, and about the same proportion from other ports.

The business naturally divides itself into the sperm and common whale fisheries. In the former, are employed about two hundred and fifty ships, whose average voyages are thirty months in length. Each of these ships may be valued, with the outfits, at \$35,000. In the right whale business are employed one hundred and fifty ships. Each of those ships, with the outfits, costs \$18,000, and the average length of the voyage is ten months. The cost is estimated low; for though some of the ships or brigs cost but little more than half of the sums at which we have valued them, many of them far exceed and almost double the estimated value. Thus is employed a capital of nearly \$12,000,000. The imports of the year 1831 were about 110,000 barrels of sperm oil, 118,000 barrels of whale oil, and 1,000,000 pounds of whalebone. The imports of the year 1832 were about 80,000 barrels of sperm oil, 175,000 barrels of whale oil, and 1,350,000 pounds of bone. From

* In the district of New Bedford, are included Fairhaven and several small ports in the vicinity. About thirty of these ships belong to those places, principally to Fairhaven.

† Stonington is included in the New London district.

the data within our reach, we estimate the annual income of the fishery for the last three years at four and a half millions of dollars. If the voyages prove as successful, and *if prices remain as high*, the annual income for the four coming years, including the present, will be more than six millions of dollars.

The sperm whalers generally load on the coast of Japan, though great quantities of sperm oil are taken in other parts of the Pacific, on the coasts of Africa and near the Azores. The chief and almost exclusive field of the right whale fishery is on the coasts of Brazil and Patagonia. The Greenland fishermen are obliged to bring home the blubber from which the oil is extracted, while our whalers have small works for extracting it, erected on deck. The scraps and pieces of carcass are used for fuel. The oil, when first extracted, is neither nauseous nor rancid, and as a proof of its sweetness, the cakes fried in the boilers are considered a great delicacy by the sailors.

The products of the sperm fishery are the sperm or lamp oil, and spermaceti candles. The products of the right whale fishery are common whale oil and whalebone. The sperm oil is almost entirely consumed in our own country in the lamp and the factory. After the head-matter of this oil is compressed, the residuum is purified and refined, and afterwards manufactured into those candles, which contribute so much to the brilliancy of our halls and parlors. By a chemical process they can be tinged with every color, and wax colored candles from Nantucket are often sold for unadulterated wax. There are between fifty and sixty candle manufactories, and the quantity annually made is about 3,000,000 pounds. The common whale oil is mostly exported to the north of Europe. The whalebone also is mostly exported to Europe. Some of it, however, we see devoted to a thousand little purposes at home. We hold it over our heads in the umbrella,—we feel it about our necks in the rigid stock, and the fairer portion of our race can give an account of the consumption of vast quantities more. The ‘stiff stays and expanded hoops’ of our great grandmothers once rendered this article far more valuable than it is at present, and should our whalers be threatened with ruin, we would implore our fair countrywomen to emulate their ancestral dames, and thus give an encouragement more grateful and effectual, than any that government can afford.

The average tonnage of our 400 whale ships, is 330 tons, and each employs about twenty-five men, making an aggre-

gate of 132,000 tons of shipping, and 10,000 men. These are employed *directly* and exclusively in the pursuit. A vast amount of capital is indirectly dependent on it. On the books of the custom-house at New Bedford, on the 30th September last, were recorded 199 ships, 82 brigs, 50 schooners, 103 sloops and 1 steamboat,—in all, 385 vessels, whose aggregate tonnage was 76,828 tons, giving employment to 5,500 seamen. At the same time were recorded on the custom-house books at Nantucket 73 ships, 21 schooners, 46 sloops, and one steamboat,—in all 141 vessels, with an aggregate tonnage of 29,400 tons, giving employment to more than 2000 seamen. Of those vessels not engaged in whaling, the larger ones are principally employed in transporting oil to Europe, and return with cargoes of hemp, duck, iron, &c. The others are employed in the coasting trade. These two districts carry on but five-eighths of the whaling business. Calculating on the same ratio, we should find that 840 vessels of various descriptions, measuring 170,000 tons, and navigated by 12,000 seamen, were dependent on the business; or about *one tenth* of the whole navigation of our country. Following the trade backward, we see the great numbers of ship-builders, traders and mechanics, who have been employed,—pursuing it forward, we see an equal number of laborers, manufacturers, coasters and factors, deriving from it their subsistence. About thirty-one per cent. of the whole income of the business is distributed among the crews on their arrival. At Mattapoisett, (Rochester,) near New Bedford, 120 vessels, of various kinds, have been built since the conclusion of the late war, and most of these have found their way into the trade. Taking into consideration the manufactories, wharves, stores, &c. and other incidental investments, we shall find that \$70,000,000 of property are involved in it, and that more than 70,000 people derive from it their chief subsistence. Our fields contribute to its supplies. Our pigs and cattle, and ship-timber from our forests, find a ready market in the whaling ports:—45,000 barrels of flour from Southern mills,—36,000 barrels of beef and pork,—900,000 lbs. of copper and copper nails,—1,500,000 staves,—2,500 tons of iron hoops, large quantities of duck, cordage, ship stores, and whale craft, are the necessary annual outfits of the whale fleet.

It would seem impossible to stretch the business to any greater extent from this country. In 1824, too great a supply of sperm oil produced a ruinous depression of prices, but the

demand was still thought to warrant a steady and gradual increase of the sperm whale fishery. The calculation is now, however, considered by the shrewdest merchants to have been too sanguine, and they already begin to anticipate a reverse. The markets for common whale oil are now precarious. They fluctuate with the fortunes of the Greenland fishery, and prices are more or less dependent on the crops and manufacture of vegetable oils in Europe. While the increase or decrease, therefore, of the sperm whale fishery ought to depend on somewhat certain calculations, the right whale fishery must fluctuate with circumstances.

It is curious, to follow the operations of the tariff on this important business. Let the Europeans cease giving bounties,* and our economy and skill would drive their whalers from the ocean. At the same time, take off the duty on olive oil, and the French will glut our markets with that article. But while the greater demand, consequent upon the decrease of whale ships, would raise the price of this article, were the duties on hemp, duck, iron, and other articles that enter into the expense of ship-building, taken off, our ships would sail cheaper, and we could again enter into competition. Give us universal, free trade, and they will float buoyantly, as they also do now that the protecting system is universal. If any pursuit demand the favor of government, it is this. Fitted out with the products of our fields, or their immediate earnings, the fleet goes forth, and draws its wealth from the bosom of the ocean. It does not exchange, but creates value, and contributes nothing to pamper the pride, or fill the coffers of a rival people. Without this business, the larger part of the southern shores of Massachusetts would exhibit a sad sterility. New Bedford is built literally upon the rocks, and the people of Nantucket have founded their house upon the sand; but though peculiarly exposed to the rains and the flood, and the beating and blowing of the winds, it yet stands strong. Here,

* The British government gave a bounty of 20s. per. tun of oil in 1733, of 40s. in 1740, and of 50s. in 1749. They have continued to give bounties, diminished, however, after about the year 1797, almost to the present moment. The kings of Denmark, Prussia, and France, have at various times given bounties and privileges to whalers. The Dutch have endeavored to revive the fishery, by remunerating their ships that make unfortunate voyages, with bounties proportionate to their losses. The French bounty at this time is about 40 francs per ton on the tonnage of the vessel.

without a bounty, with only a single incidental protection (more than balanced by counteracting duties) the whole population have devoted themselves to the business, and against all European competition, propped and sustained as it is, they now supply half the markets of northern Europe, and our own continent besides; a confirmation strong, that men, sinews and muscle are the secrets of commercial success; that they are the secrets of comfort and opulence. Indeed, it may be doubted, whether any branch of commercial business, in any country, was ever prosecuted more honorably, more successfully, and more ardently, than the whale fishery from New England for the last fifteen years.

Let us look at it as a nursery of seamen. Chiefly with an eye to this object, the English government encouraged this fishery. It was necessary for each ship to carry a certain number of 'green men and apprentices,' before it could be entitled to the bounty. They encouraged it for the sake of promoting a love of adventure, to inure their seamen to toil and peril, to compel them to become skilful, watchful, and hardy. Accordingly we find, that many of those heroes, who have carried the British trident triumphantly over the globe, and eclipsed the naval glories of Carthage, Venice and Holland, were conversant with similar scenes and toils. The veteran who, with one arm and one eye, carried consternation into the combined fleets of Europe at Trafalgar, first signalized his decision and prowess under the same arctic sky to which the British whaler was exposed. If the longest voyages, that are made over the ocean,—if the navigation of every sea on the globe, serene or boisterous,—if the strictest discipline and subordination of large crews, constitute a nursery for seamen,—we have one which it should be our pride and duty to protect.

We hope we shall be pardoned for going into these lengthened details. The purpose of this article was to give a statistical account of the business. It is a subject, with which most of the community are entirely unacquainted. The newspapers give most accurate descriptions of every little watering place, which counts a dozen visitors for the season; and every wart on the little finger of Paganini the fidler, is minutely described, while a trade that employs one tenth of the navigation of the Union, and has thus become an important part of the national industry, is the subject only of partial and erroneous statements. We have no American book or pamphlet on the subject,

unless the little tracts, the title of which we have placed at the head of this article, may be called so. In these tracts, the whole subject of the American whale fishery is this summarily despatched.

‘The whale fishery is a very important branch of the business of this country. The chief towns from which it is carried on are Nantucket and New Bedford. There are in the former, fifty (?) manufactories of oil and candles. There are now sixty-two ships belonging to the port, and six ships are building for the whaling business. The value of this fleet, as fitted for sea, amounts to about 2,000,000 dollars.’

If we understand the meaning of the word, any book that pretends to the title of Scientific Tract, should contain full, true and accurate information. The compiler should have known, though his selections from Captain Scoresby are judicious, that the American whale fishery is of immeasurably more importance to us than any other; and as such, demanded his notice.

With the name of fishermen, we are apt to associate ideas of rudeness and ignorance: but a large portion of the crew of a whaler are the hardy, intelligent sons of our soil. It requires some nerve and some stirrings of enterprise to leave a home and friends for a three years’ voyage. Being paid by a certain proportion of the cargo, they habitually become alert and vigilant in the prosecution of the voyage. Prompted by the common craving for wealth, and the hope of promotion, they are orderly and ambitious. Some of them improve the leisure of a long voyage by reading. Many of the officers are scientific navigators. That they are men of responsibility and character, is proved by the fact, that a trust of \$100,000, in instances of remarkable success, may be subject to their discretion. The original stock from which the seamen were selected, has of late furnished but part of the crew. The rest are a motley collection. There are often found on the same deck the lingering remnants of the aborigines of this State, in specimens of the Gay-head and Marshpee tribes,—the runaway slave,—a renegade tar from the British navy,—the Irish,—the Dutch,—the mongrel Portuguese from the Azores, and the natives of the Sandwich Islands, from which the captains make up the complements of crews diminished by accident or disease, or scanty by design. There too may be seen a race of men, of which ‘long Tom Coffin’ is no mean representative; and sometime

deeply ensconced in the loose garb of a sailor, the effeminate face of some precocious youth, who, in a college or a computing room, has worn out all forbearance of friends and tutors; lastly, the shrewd native of the nutmeg State, who has so far mistaken his peculiar bent of mind, that he now ploughs the broad ocean, instead of vending his clocks and clothes-pins from Dan to Beersheba on shore. There in short may be seen the natives of four continents, cheek by jowl, at the same mess, mingling in the same merry jests, and laughing reciprocally at each others' blunders.

The subordination of these crews is evinced by the fact, that although composed of such various materials, and absent on long cruises, broils and mutinies rarely occur. When they have occurred, they have generally resulted in no evil. To one mutiny, however, we can hardly find a parallel in the annals of piracy and murder. It took place on board the ship *Globe* of Nantucket, in 1823. A reckless cold-blooded villain, of the name of Comstock, planned it,—murdered with his own hand, with the most brutal atrocity, all the officers,—took command of the ship, and sailed for the Mulgrave Islands. While the mutineers were on shore, a counterplot was devised, and Comstock himself paid the penalty due to his malignity, in being shot by his confederates. Several of the crew escaped with the ship and arrived safely at Valparaiso, where she was delivered to the American consul. Of those remaining on the island, all were murdered by the natives, except two, William Lay, and Cyrus M. Hussey, who were subsequently taken off by the United States' schooner *Dolphin*, and restored to their homes. When they arrived in this country, they published a narrative of the mutiny, and of their captivity among the islanders.

As the whale ship escapes with perhaps fewer disasters, so the men are generally more healthy than in any other seafaring employments. They experience nothing so fearful, as many merchant ships do, from the direful diseases of the tropical regions. Those ships, however, which frequent stormy seas, and remain long abroad without fresh provisions, often find the scurvy making its fearful ravages. It is also true, that the unfortunate man, who is not active enough to elude the line, is sometimes carried down by it. Sometimes bones are broken, and lives lost, in the rough contests with the inhabitants of the deep. Sometimes a boat's crew is separated and never heard

of, though they generally reach the land, or are rescued by some other vessel. Notwithstanding these causes of disaster, ship after ship returns without losing a man by death.

Among the accidents that have occurred in the prosecution of this business, the loss of the ship *Essex*, Captain George Pollard, Jr. of Nantucket, is one of the most remarkable. It was thus described in an authentic narrative of the event, published by the mate of the ship, Mr. Owen Chase.

‘ I observed a very large spermaceti whale, as well as I could judge about eighty-five (?) feet in length. He broke water about twenty rods off our weather bow, and was lying quietly with his head in a direction for the ship. He spouted two or three times, and then disappeared. In less than three seconds he came up again, about the length of the ship off, and made directly for us, at the rate of about three knots. The ship was then going with about the same velocity. His appearance and attitude gave us at first no alarm, but while I stood watching his movements and observing him, but a ship’s length off, coming down for us with great celerity, I involuntarily ordered the boy at the helm to put it hard up, intending to sheer off and avoid him. The words were scarcely out of my mouth before he came down upon us at full speed, and struck the ship with his head just forward of the fore chains. He gave us such an appalling and tremendous jar as nearly threw us all on our faces. The ship brought up as suddenly and violently as if she had struck a rock, and trembled for a few moments like a leaf. We looked at each other in perfect amazement, deprived almost of the power of speech. Many minutes elapsed before we were able to realize the dreadful accident, during which time he passed under the ship, grazing her keel as he went along, came up alongside her to leeward, and lay on the top of the water, apparently stunned with the violence of the blow, for the space of a minute. He then suddenly started off in a direction to leeward. After a few moments’ reflection, and recovering in some measure from the sudden consternation that had seized us, I, of course, concluded that he had stove a hole in the ship, and that it would be necessary to set the pumps going. Accordingly they were rigged, but had not been in operation more than one minute, before I perceived the head of the ship to be gradually settling down in the water. I then ordered the signal to be set for the other boats, (at that time in pursuit of whales,) which I had scarcely despatched, before I again discovered the whale apparently in convulsions on the top of the water about one hundred rods to leeward. He was enveloped in the foam, that his continual and violent

threshing about in the water had created around him, and I could distinctly see him smite his jaws together as if distracted with rage and fury. He remained a short time in this situation, and then started off with great velocity across the bows of the ship to windward. By this time the ship had settled down a considerable distance in the water, and I gave her up as lost. I however, ordered the pumps to be kept constantly going, and endeavored to collect my thoughts for the occasion. I turned to the boats, two of which we then had with the ship, with an intention of clearing them away and getting all things ready to embark in them, if there should be no other resource left. While my attention was thus engaged for a moment, I was roused by the cry of the man at the hatchway, "here he is,—he is making for us again." I turned around, and saw him about one hundred rods directly ahead of us, coming down with apparently twice his ordinary speed, and to me it appeared with tenfold fury and vengeance in his aspect. The surf flew in all directions, and his course towards us was marked by a white foam of a rod in width, which he made with a continual violent threshing of his tail. His head was about half out of water, and in that way he came upon, and again struck the ship. I was in hopes when I descried him making for us, that by putting the ship away immediately, I should be able to cross the line of his approach, before he could get up to us, and thus avoid, what I knew, if he should strike us again, would be our inevitable destruction. I called out to the helmsman "hard up," but she had not fallen off more than a point before we took the second shock. I should judge the speed of the ship at this time, to have been about three knots, and that of the whale about six. He struck her to windward, directly under the cat-head, and completely stove in her bows. He passed under the ship again, went off to leeward, and we saw no more of him.'

This disastrous encounter occurred near the equator, at one thousand miles' distance from land. Provisioned and equipped with whatever they could save from the wreck, twenty men embarked in three slender whale boats, one of which was already crazy and leaky. One boat was never heard of afterwards. The crews of the others suffered every misery that can be conceived, from famine and exposure. In the captain's boat, they drew lots for the privilege of being shot to satisfy the rabid hunger of the rest. After nearly three months, the captain's boat, with two survivors, and the mate's boat with three, were taken up at sea, two thousand miles from the scene of the disaster, by different ships.

There have been other instances of shipwreck, caused by the shock of these leviathans. In 1807, the ship *Union* of Nantucket, Captain Gardner, was totally lost between Nantucket and the Azores, by a similar concussion. But no other instance is known, in which the mischief is supposed to have been malignantly designed by the assailant, and the most experienced whalers believe that even in this case the attack was not intentional. Mr. Chase, however, could not be persuaded to think so. He says that all he saw ‘produced on his mind the impression of decided and calculating mischief’ on the part of this maddened leviathan.

The whaler sometimes roams for months, without finding his prey; but he is buoyed up by the expectation of finally reaping the profits of a great voyage. To some minds, the pursuit of such gigantic game has a tinge of the romantic. There must be a thrilling excitement in the adventurous chase. ‘The blood more stirs to rouse a lion, than to start a hare.’ Many become passionately attached to the business, notwithstanding all its privations, and reluctantly leave it at last. They have moments of most pleasing anxiety, and meet with some incidents of the most enlivening cast. On the south-east coast of Africa is Delego Bay, a calm smooth place, frequented by vessels from various parts of the world. In this bay, a few years since, a whale was observed about equally distant from an American and an English ship. From both, the boats were lowered, manned and pushed off in an instant. They sped with the velocity of the wind. The scene reminds one of the competitors for the prize in Æneas’s boat-race on the shores of Sicily.

‘Olli certamine summo

Procumbunt : vastis tremit ictibus aenea puppis,
Subtrahiturque solum.’

‘Now, one and all they tug amain : They row
At the full stretch, and shake the brazen prow,—
The sea beneath them sinks.’

The English, at first ahead, perceiving their rivals gaining upon them, bore wide off to keep them out of reach of the whale. When the two boats were nearly abreast, one of the American sailors leaped from his seat, and with extraordinary agility hurled the ponderous harpoon over the English boat,—it struck the

monster in the vital part,—the English boat shrunk back under the warp,—the waves were crimsoned with blood,—and the American took possession, while the whole bay echoed and reëchoed with repeated shouts of applause.

Our whalemén have brought nautical science to great perfection. The voyage round the southern extremity of Cape Horn has always been represented as a most boisterous one. It was once thought so hazardous, that some national vessels have preferred to be buffeted about in the straits of Magellan, to attempting it. But the great whale fleets are never intimidated, and rarely does an accident occur to damp their ardor. A boat or a spar are the most serious losses they suffer, and their unfailing success, in effecting a passage, has been a subject of wonder to the naval officers of Britain. In the south seas, they have brought to light islands before unknown, and found men who had never before seen a ship, or civilized man,—men who exhibited the same savage ferocity, to which so many navigators have fallen victims in the Pacific. On the latest maps and charts we find more than thirty of these islands, and reefs bearing the names of Nantucket captains and merchants. To one is applied the harmonious title of New Nantucket.

Our sealers have been equally adventurous in their explorations. A few years since, two Russian discovery ships came in sight of a group of cold inhospitable islands in the Antarctic ocean. The commander imagined himself a discoverer, and doubtless was prepared, with drawn sword, and with the flag of his sovereign flying over his head, to take possession in the name of the Czar. At this time he was becalmed in a dense fog. Judge of his surprise, when the fog cleared away, to see a little sealing sloop from Connecticut, as quietly riding between his ships, as if lying in the waters of Long Island sound. He learned from the captain, that the islands were already well known, and that he had just returned from exploring the shores of a new land at the south; upon which the Russian gave vent to an expression too harsh to be repeated, but sufficiently significant of his opinion of American enterprise. After the captain of the sloop, he named the discovery 'Palmer's land,' in which the Americans acquiesced, and by this name it appears to be designated on all the recently published Russian and English charts.

A singular fact, connected with the whale and seal fisheries,
VOL. XXXVIII.—NO. 82.

illustrates the truth that accident, or private and individual enterprise, can often effect more than the most costly expeditions. Many are the voyages that have been undertaken for the purpose of reaching the poles of the earth. It is known, that after the disruptions in summer, the vast masses of ice generally drift away from the polar regions. Attempts have been made to thread a passage through the drift ice, and thus reach the pole ; and again the visionary scheme has been devised, of dashing over it with a sledge and reindeer, and thus taking the poles, as it were, by storm. They have all failed ; but the English whalers at the north and our sealers at the south, have several times found themselves beyond the ice, where the vast and smooth expanse opened to them, inviting them to explore those unknown and 'awful mysteries, about which the imaginations of men have for ages been busied.' Captain Scoresby tells us what were his emotions when within 470 miles of the pole. He felt that it was in his power to penetrate those dreary solitudes, unexplored by man, since the fiat of the Almighty brought the universe into existence. He was restrained from the attempt, by the reflection, that his voyage was private, for private ends. That this region is frequently open, is confirmed by the fact, that large numbers of whales come over that part of the globe. Roused to enthusiasm by such reports, a gentleman by the name of Reynolds promised 'to place his little vessel where she should turn round on the very axis of the earth every twenty-four hours.' For this purpose he thought he had obtained an appropriation from the last administration, but it was *vetoed* by the present. A private company fitted out the brigs Seraph and Annawan, to aid him in his researches, but the attempt proved as futile as all similar ones. The vessels returned with great loss, and were sold, we believe, under the hammer of the auctioneer.

We have not mentioned one important branch of the whale fishery,—the more important, as it threatens to divert the British southern fishery to another part of the earth. The settlers at New South Wales have carried it on for several years with great spirit and success. At the port of Sydney alone, in 1830, sixteen vessels were actually employed, and nine new ones were building. Their proximity to the most eligible fishing stations enables them to perform three voyages, while the English and Americans perform two. While they reach the grounds in fifty days, the latter are frequently seven months in

performing the passage. The freight of the oil from New Holland to England is estimated at only a tenth of the amount they can realize by being employed in the fishery during the time they would consume in going to and returning from England themselves. The New Hollanders anticipate a monopoly of the trade, and already British ships have gone to engage with them in the fishery, instructed to act upon the principle of shipping their oil homeward and refitting from the colony.

In 1784, the King of France endeavored to give an impulse to the whaling business in his dominions, by fitting out six ships at his own expense. Allured by peculiar immunities, several families from Nantucket settled at Dunkirk. The business increased so rapidly, that forty ships were employed in 1793. With every thing else, this business was suspended and overwhelmed by the Revolution. Most of the Americans returned, and one of the gentlemen settled in New Bedford, where he became opulent by the prosecution of the business from his own country. Under similar inducements, an American gentleman is now deeply engaged in the French whale fishery. The French whale fleet at the present moment may be estimated at forty sail, three fourths of which sail from the port of Havre.

Taking into consideration the ships that sail from the German ports, with the English, French, and American fleets, we shall find that more than 700 ships are engaged in pursuing these mighty inhabitants of the deep. In one part of the world, they have been driven to the deepest recesses of Baffin's Bay, and in another to the very confines of the Pacific. Whether their mammoth bones shall indicate to the untaught natives of the shores they frequent, in some distant century, that such an animal *was*, or whether, lurking in the inaccessible and undisturbed waters north of Asia and America, the race shall be preserved, is almost a problem. Certain it is that subsistence can never fail, teeming as all waters do, with such profusion of life. That a squadron of 700 vessels scour every sea and bay, in the eager and unremitted pursuit, without exterminating or apparently diminishing the species, leaves us to wonder at the exhaustless resources of nature.